



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Scott L. Newsome, Representatives Karin Adams, Robert Bailey, Jeanne Baker, Joe Baril, Alicia T. Bauer, Rafael Burgos, Jr., Clarence Casper, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Susan Deane-Shinbrot, Jim Evans, Thomas A. Frickman, Bob Garcia, Nancy Gilly, Matthew G. Longino, Jim Loughlin, Emily Maher, Brandon Marley, Jackie Massett, Lisa McCabe, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe L. Merritt, Jim Nault, Kathy Neugent, Lian Obrey, Juliette M. Parker, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Carolann Quinn, Dutcha Sliker-Hersant, Joan Steinfeld, Irma J. Streeter, James L. Streeter, Archie Swindell, Patricia Wagner, Lori A. Watrous, Gary Welles, Ivy R. Williams, and Jonathan Wilson.

Monday, May 1, 2017

7:00 PM

Groton Senior Center

ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

A. ROLL CALL

*Moderator Scott Newsome called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.
28 members were present, and a quorum was declared.*

Members Present: Moderator Newsome, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Burgos, Jr., Rep. Casper, Rep. Kent, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Evans, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. McCabe, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Nault, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Parker, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Sliker-Hersant, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous, Rep. Welles and Rep. Wilson

Members Absent: Rep. Baker, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Longino, Rep. Maher, Rep. Marley, Rep. Massett, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Powers, Rep. Wagner and Rep. Williams

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Cindy Landry, Human Resources Director Robert Zagami, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner, Town Attorney Eileen Duggan, Town Mayor Bruce Flax, Town Councilors Karen Morton and Bonnie Nault, Board of Education members Gretchen Newsome, Lee White, Andrea Ackerman, Jay Weitlauf, Katrina Fitzgerald and Rita Volkman, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Dawn Rahilly.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The members joined the Moderator in a moment of silence and Salute to the Flag.

Rep. Powers arrived at 7:09 p.m. 29 members present.

C. CALL OF THE MEETING

Moderator Scott Newsome read the Call of the Meeting.

2017-0055 Resolution Setting RTM Budget Meeting Date for the FYE 2018 Annual Town Budget

RESOLUTION SETTING RTM BUDGET MEETING DATE ON THE FYE 2018 ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET

WHEREAS, Section 9.3.1 of the Groton Town Charter requires that the Town Council determine the date for the annual budget meeting of the Representative Town Meeting, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Annual Budget Meeting of the Representative Town Meeting will be held on Monday, May 1, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Groton Senior Center, Newtown Road, Groton, Connecticut.

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

Moderator Scott Newsome explained the conduct to be observed during the citizen comments. He stated the comments are limited to Groton residents and imposed a three minute time limit.

Carl Strand, 373 River Road, Mystic, stated he was a resident of the Old Mystic Fire District and spoke of the dangerous situation with the North Stonington bridge being closed and the intersection of Main Street and Route 27. He requested funding be restored to the budget. If it is not restored there is a good possibility we will lose Federal Grant funds for this project.

Patty Anderson, 18 Charles Street, Mystic, spoke in support of the Groton Public Library. She stated it is an important asset to the community and commented about the helpful, friendly staff and many assets the library offers. She would like to see the funding cut from the libraries budget restored.

Steve Anderson, 18 Charles Street, Mystic, commented on an important feature of the Groton Public library are the computers. They are an asset, in particular, for older residents looking for jobs. He supports restoring funding to the library.

Yolanda Cooley, 259 Noank-Ledyard Road, Mystic, stated that she is a 25 year resident of Mystic with two children at Northeast Academy and supports the Board of Education budget.

Rosanne Kotowski, 24 Ann Avenue, Mystic, stated that Groton needs to reduce spending in the Town and Board of Education budgets, especially salaries and benefits. She urged RTM members to request to see the non-union management agreement that has not been updated since 2006. She would like the RTM to change the way they review and consider the budget. She would like to see the RTM consider the taxpayers who are the giving side of the budget process and what they can afford.

Barbara Frucht, 300 Brandegee Avenue, spoke on behalf of the Bill Memorial Library and asked for the RTMs support. She stated the Board of Directors struggle with the upkeep of the historic building. Through fundraising and careful budget monitoring, they have been able to maintain the building. With the closing of Pleasant Valley School she anticipates an even greater need for the services of the library.

Frances Whitney, 112 Deerfield Ridge Drive, Mystic, has two children at Northeast Academy and supports the Board of Education budget. She does not want the Town to be known for poor quality schools.

Rep. Bauer arrived at 7:26 p.m. 30 members present.

Larry Croxton, 35 Knoll Drive, spoke in support of the Board of Education budget and asked for restoring some of the funds cut by the Town Council. He stated that the State is still working on the budget. It is still unclear how much will be cut from Grotons funding and therefore we should not cut until we know exactly how much needs to be cut. As the legislature works to create a budget, we need to let them know why we are different than other communities in Connecticut and urged a grass roots effort to inform them of our needs in Groton.

Gretchen Chipperini, 87 Phoenix Drive, stated she is representing the ordinary taxpayer in Groton. She discussed the Odd Fellows Home and Balfour Beatty Housing and the services the resident enjoy at the expense of the taxpayers of Groton. Impact aid from the military does not begin to cover the cost of services such as education, police and ambulance. She continued, these housing communities need to be on the Town grand list and pay their fair share, as is the case in military communities in other states. She stated an 11% increase in property tax is unsustainable and asks the RTM to reject this budget.

Valerie Riley, 6 Bolles Lane, Mystic, has two children in the Groton Public School system and

supports the Board of Education budget proposed by Dr. Graner.

Timothy Pratt, 1288 River Road, Mystic, Chairman of the Jabez Smith House Committee spoke in support of the budget proposed for the operating of the Jabez Smith House. He stated that the historic farmhouse is a part of Groton's history, an active museum and resource for the Town.

Annie Rogers, 208 High Street, Mystic, stated she chose to move to Mystic 12 years ago because of it's schools. She voiced her support for Groton's public schools and said if Groton does not support it's schools, she will leave the community.

Claire Rogers, 138 Payer Lane, Mystic, expressed her agreement with others that came before her in support of the education budget.

Alicia Stanwood, 139 Ridgewood Drive, Mystic, supports the Groton Public School system and restoring funding to the budget.

Kevin Trejo, 536 Shennecossett Road, spoke of his concerns over the proposed cuts to West Side Middle School indicated in the handout outlining where cuts to the BOE budget would come from. Spanish teachers can not be cut from that area. He encourages questioning Dr. Graner on some of the cuts. He also stated that public safety is equally important in all areas of Groton. He urged the RTM to do their homework and ask the right questions.

Mitch Shinbrot, 116 Dartmouth Drive, Mystic, has been a Groton resident for 32 years. His children were educated in the school system and while he understands the importance of a good school system, he urged all to question who is going to pay for this.

Ian Thomas, 159 Shennecossett Parkway, spoke about cuts to education budget in the handout and feels if cuts are necessary they should be shared equitably across the whole community and urged the RTM to restore funds cut to the Board of Education budget.

Mike Whitney, 112 Deerfield Ridge Drive, Mystic, stated his support of education and hopes that our representatives in Hartford can come up with a more sensible solution to the budget crisis and our funds will be restored. He noted surrounding towns are increasing their education budgets by approx. 2% and we are decreasing ours by 2.2% and urged the RTM to restore funding cuts.

Charlotte Whitney, 112 Deerfield Ridge Drive, Mystic, a student at Northeast Academy asked the RTM to support the Board of Education budget.

Portia Borderline, 159 Shennecossett Parkway, expressed her concerns over proposed cuts at West Side Middle School. She noted the disparity between West Side and Cutler Middle School. She requested the RTM restore the funding to the Board of Education budget.

Jim Gustafson, 61 Algonquin Drive, Mystic, stated his support for the Board of Education budget and asked to have the funds restored.

John Piacenza, 34 Ice House Lane, Mystic, spoke of his experience as a Purchasing Agent for Groton for over 21 years and his familiarity with operations in all town departments. Groton receives about 20% of it's revenue from the State. The financial crisis is not an anomaly and is going to continue to affect Groton for many years. He feels the RTM and Town Council need to have a framework when reviewing the budget. There is criteria that needs to be considered such as essential and non-essential functions of Town departments. State mandates versus things that add to the quality of life in Groton. Many residents are on fixed incomes and if Groton continues to raise taxes it will have a devastating effect on housing prices. The RTM needs to consider the greater good for all residents of Groton.

Andrew Mierta, 11 Carol Court, noted Electric Boat will be adding 1,350 new jobs and 2,500 more by 2020. Families of those hired will look at the school system and may look to relocate in other towns if we cut our Education budget.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Newsome stated that Reps. Baker, Massett and Wagner notified the Town Clerk that they were unable to attend tonight's meeting.

Moderator Newsome called for a recess at 8:01 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:05 p.m.

Rep. Obrey called for a Democratic caucus at 8:06 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:26 p.m.

F. BUDGET UPDATE - Town Manager & Superintendent of Schools

Town Manager Mark Oefinger handed out a sheet with the re-capitulation of various Town Council actions. They have cut a little over 6 million, which is approximately 5 % decrease, from the proposed FYE 2018 budget. This would require a 1.61 mill rate increase.

Superintendent of School Dr. Michael Graner presented a handout outlining budget modifications to the 2017-2018 Board of Education School Budget. He explained how the board plans to cut 2.9 million from Town Council approved budget. He then identified Level 1 and Level 2 reductions and detailed what was going to be eliminated and the savings associated with those eliminations.

Moderator Newsome reminded the members May 18th the Education budget comes before RTM. He asked them to please reserve their comments and questions until that meeting, unless they need clarification from Dr. Graner on something he discussed this evening.

Rep. Obrey asked Dr. Graner if there was a plan in place to relocate the 300 children from Pleasant Valley Elementary School and what effect, if any, would it have on racial balance in the schools.

Dr. Graner responded there is a committee working on the relocation of the students involved. There will be a lottery for some students to attend Northeast Academy and Katherine Kowalski. There will also be a K-5 class at Charles Barnum that will accommodate approximately 30 students. Dr. Graner also explained they are working with a consultant to ensure racial balance.

Rep. Obrey asked for clarification on the math specialist going between West Side and Cutler Middle Schools.

Dr. Graner explained there will be one math specialist that will split their time between the two schools.

Rep. Obrey urged members to look closely at the cuts proposed for West Side Middle School.

Rep. Casper questioned how the elimination of 18 teachers from Pleasant Valley are going to affect class size as the number of students will remain the same.

Dr. Graner explained the redistricting plan and the effect it will have on equalizing class size.

Moderator Newsome called for a recess at 8:48 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:51 p.m.

Rep. Obrey left at 8:51 p.m. 29 Members present.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

See attached schedule for the details of budget sessions. Note that the schedule is subject to change.

2017-0081 FYE 2018 RTM Annual Meeting Schedule**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Chairman Nault read minutes of the meeting held on April 10, 2017. (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Powers.

Rep. Wilson requested roll call vote on approval of the minutes.

The minutes were approved by roll call vote unanimously.

Chairman Nault read the minutes of the meeting held on April 17, 2017. (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Parker and so voted unanimously.

Chairman Nault read the minutes of the meeting held on April 20, 2017. (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Gilly and so voted unanimously.

Rep. Wilson disclosed he is a volunteer member of the Mystic River Ambulance Association and the City of Groton Fire Department. He stated he does not participate in any budgetary or fiscal decisions and does not intend to recuse himself from discussion or voting on any accounts.

Rep. Watrous disclosed she is an employee of the Town of Groton working in the Assessor division of the Finance Department.

Rep. Deane-Shinbrot disclosed she is an employee of the Town of Groton through the Board of Education and vice-president of the Para Union.

Rep. Parker disclosed she is an employee of the City of Groton. She does not participate in any financial decision making and intends on voting.

The Moderator reminded members that ex-officio members of the RTM, under Rule 9.2, have the rights and privileges of RTM members with the exception of making motions or voting.

Account 1001 - Legislative Policy

A motion for \$61,155 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Responding to questions, the Town Manager explained the history behind the Town's acquisition of the Jabez Smith House and the cost to maintain it. It was a gift to the Town and as stipulated, Groton is legally obligated to maintain the property.

Rep. Parker questioned the increase in the Charter Revision Committee account.

Mr. Oefinger explained that as the committee continues to work and come up with recommendations and suggestions, there will be questions the Town attorney will need to look at. The amount allocated for legal fees is a "guesstimate" as there is no way to know what those costs will be. Additionally, there are other costs associated with the committee such as printing expenses, etc.

Rep. Parker questioned why the legal fees would not come out of the Town's legal account.

Town Clerk Moukawsher explained there is a special account for all the cost associated with the Charter Revision, including legal fees. Town Manager Oefinger gave a detailed breakdown of the costs associated specific items in the Charter Revision budget.

The vote on \$61,155 carried 28 in favor, 1 abstention. (Abstaining: Rep. Parker.)

Account 1005 - Town Clerk

Rep. Nault commented that last year he was concerned about the amount of mailing and postage. It appears a good job was done with regard to scaling that back.

A motion for \$312,896 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously.

Town Clerk Moukawsher thanked the members of the RTM.

Account 1006 - Legal Services

A motion for \$400,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Town Attorney Eileen Duggan informed the members that this number is an estimate, derived from looking back historically, as there is no way to anticipate how many law suits the Town will be involved in.

The vote on \$400,000 carried unanimously.

Account 1010 - Executive Management

A motion for \$ 301,959 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Parker.

Rep. Nault stated the Town Manager's recommended figure for this account provides funding for the new position of Assistant to the Town Manager. Given the budget crisis the Town is currently experiencing, it is not the time to be promoting or hiring new people. The figure recommended by the committee reflects the lack of funding for the new position.

Town Councilor Morton urged the RTM to pass funding for the Town Manger's recommendation. She explained that this account was funded at a level that provide for the new position of Assistant to the Town Manager. With the Town Manager retiring, and the prospect of a new Town Manager, the Town Council felt the need for continuity and knowledge of the office of the Town Manager. They felt it was in the best interest of the Town to promote Nicki Bresnyan to the new position. If the RTM decides to cut funding, it will not affect the new salary because of contractual obligations, and only reduce the new Town Manager's budget.

Moderator Newsome recalled Mr. Oefinger vehement opposition last year to this new position and questioned if his change of position has to do with his impending retirement.

Mr. Oefinger praised Councilor Morton for her explanation of the importance of continuity in the Town Manager's office. He state that Ms. Bresnyan is capable and if it were not her in that position he is not certain he would recommend an Assistant to the Town Manager.

In response to Moderator Newsome's question as to added responsibilities, the Town Manager noted certain projects she is currently working on and various duties she performs for the Town Manager's office.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$308,110 was made by Rep. Jim Streeter, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld.

Rep. Streeter's justification for proposing this number is the importance of continuity in the

department with the Town Manager leaving.

Rep. Neugent spoke in support of the amendment. She doesn't see the position of Assistant Town Manager being added anywhere in the near future and therefore feels this new position is appropriate.

The vote on \$308,110 carried 20 in favor, 7 opposed, 2 abstentions. (Opposed: Reps. Bailey, Frickman, Kent, Nault, Parker, Quinn and Swindell. Abstaining: Reps. McDermott and Merritt.)

Account 1012 - Human Resources

The Town Manager notified the Moderator that the Human Resource Director Robert Zagami, who was in attendance earlier, had left due to illness. Mr. Oefinger offered to go through the accounts with the Finance Director Cindy Landy, and answer questions to the best of their ability, or defer the accounts until another evening.

Moderator Newsome stated in his opinion there is a lot of information for those accounts and would prefer Mr. Zagami was present to answer questions.

A motion to reschedule Accounts 1012, 1070 and 1071 was made by Moderator Newsome, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously.

Account 1013 - Finance

A motion for \$1,376,903 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Finance Director Cindy Landry presented a brief overview of the budget and the departments functions and responsibilities. She noted the Tax Office contributes 68% of annual revenue to the Town. Budget cuts in FY 2017 resulted in the loss of a position in the tax office impacting the level of service to taxpayers, as well as collection of back taxes. Revenue from collecting back taxes are down approximately \$300,000 compared to the same time period last year. Ms. Landry requests restoring the Town Managers budget number enabling the tax office to restore the full time position cut in FYE 2016/2017.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,395,374 was made by Rep. Steinfeld, seconded by Rep. Powers.

Responding to a questions from Moderator Newsome, Ms. Landry explained that the department is not looking to add a new position to the department, rather to re-instate the position that was lost in the 2017 budget. She could not answer how much re-instating the position will bring in with regard to revenue, but will enable the department to keep up with the collection of delinquent taxes.

The vote on \$1,395,374 carried 18 in favor, 9 opposed, 2 abstentions. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Bailey, Frickman, Hubbard, McDermott, Nault, Quinn, Slieker-Hersant, Swindell. Abstaining: Reps. Parker and Watrous.)

At 10:01 p.m. the Moderator recessed the meeting until May 4, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Session - Thursday, May 4, 2017

Moderator Scott Newsome called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Members Present: Moderator Newsome, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Baker, Rep. Baril, Rep. Casper, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Evans, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Kent, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCabe, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Nault, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Parker, Rep. Pasqualini, Rep. Powers, Rep. Slieker-Hersant, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. I. Streeter, Rep. J.

Streeter, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Welles.

Members Absent: Rep. Bauer, Rep. Burgos, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Longino, Rep. Maher, Rep. Marley, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Wagner Rep. Williams and Rep. Wilson.

Moderator Newsome stated that 28 members were present and he declared a quorum.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Burgos, Hubbard, Neugent, Wagner and Wilson notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Nicki Bresnayan, City Police Chief Thomas Davoren, City Mayor Marion Galbraith, Deputy Mayor Keith Hedrick Town Mayor Bruce Flax, Town Councilors, City Councilors, Finance Director Cindy Landry, City Finance Director Ron Yuhas, Manager of Information Technology Brain Hancock, Director Human Resources/Risk Mgmt Robert Zagami, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Town Clerk Office Assistant Michael Thorpe.

FINANCE COMMITTEE (continued)

Account 1012 - Human Resources

A motion for \$340,870 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Powers.

Rep. Nault explained that the committee spent more time on this account than any other due to the fact that it included funding for a Risk Manager position and the Town Manager's amount for this account was more than requested.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$316,244 was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Evans.

Rep. Nault stated that this was the requested amount by the Human Resources Department.

Rep. Maher arrived, 29 members present.

Human Resources Director Robert Zagami stated that he was reluctant to ask for additional funding this year, but after talking with the Town Manager they believe a Risk Manager position would more than pay for itself.

Rep. Quinn arrived, 30 members present.

Responding to numerous questions Director Zagami stated that the Risk Manager would investigate any mishaps and reduce insurance costs. He added that with proper training of department supervisor's many worker's compensation cases could be prevented. He continued to say that OSHA has not been an issue at this time.

Responding to Rep. McDermott, Director Zagami acknowledged that there would be no additional discounts on insurance for having a Risk Manager but would reduce costs by prevention of accidents.

Rep. Bauer arrived, 31 members present.

Rep. Evans stated that department supervisor's should be responsible for safety.

Rep. Kent suggested to tune-up management and change supervisor's if needed. Hiring more people is not the answer.

The vote on \$316,244 carried 19 in favor, 12 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Baker, Casper, Gilly, Loughlin, Maher, Massett, Merritt, Newsome, I. Streeter, Swindell, Watrous and Welles.)

Account 1070 - Insurance and Claims

A motion for \$622,425 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

The vote on \$622,425 carried 30 in favor, 1 abstention. (Abstaining: Rep. Merritt.)

Account 1071 - Self Funded Plans

A motion for \$7,656,157 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Parker.

Rep. Nault stated that the Bond rating agencies look at the Fund Balance and the Self Funded Plans in their rating computations. He asked the Town Manager if the OPEB funding could be cut by \$200,000.

Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that he would not recommend any cuts on this account due to the fact we will be going out to bond for school projects.

The vote on \$7,656,157 carried 28 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Baril and Pasqualini. Abstaining: Rep. Merritt.)

Account 10900 - City of Groton Police

A motion for \$2,243,802 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Responding to Rep. Massett, Chief Davoren explained that part of the Town Council's rationale in cutting their requested budget was giving back to the Town half of their surplus from last year.

City Finance Director Ron Yuhas stated that there was conversation with the Town Council about returning surplus funds but also being able to ask for more funding if over budget. He added that there was no agreement.

Responding to Rep. Obrey, Rep. Maher stated that the cut to the Town Police was 3.9%.

Chief Davoren reviewed a handout given to all RTM members. He discussed staffing levels for the last 5 years and the funding levels between the City and Town Police. He discussed the City Police Budget, its request for Town funding and the Town Council adjustments. He talked about the impacts of the Town Council's adjustments and the comparison of adjustments made between the City and Town Police. He noted an adjusted City funding request to be in parity with the Town Police budget. He discussed the 4% increase in the operating budget over the prior year and the City calculation for the Other Post Employee Benefit adjustment.

Town Mayor Bruce Flax stated that since 2010 the City has returned \$984,000 to the City General Fund from the City Public Safety Fund. He noted that 48.5% of those funds were from Town funding. He added that in 2013 \$305,000 was returned. Last year \$118,590 was returned and that they have never been over budget. He continued to say that when you talk about comparison, each department needs to be looked at individually.

Rep. Pasqualini stated that the proposed figure is a \$60,000 cut from what they received last year. All accounts need to be cut this year.

Rep. McDermott mentioned the Town and City Police budgets total \$14.5 million dollars \$10 million for Town and \$4.5 million for the City. He reminded the RTM and the listening public of an independent research study in 2013 that showed the Town could take over the City Police with 16 Officers.

POINT OF ORDER was raised by Rep. Massett. She stated that this discussion was on the City Police budget not on merging the departments. Moderator Newsome allowed Rep. McDermott's statement as it was something that needs to be looked at in the future.

Rep. Kent made an observation that he recently moved from Bridgewater, New Jersey which has a similar size and population of Groton. They have 75 Officers compared to Groton's 116.

Responding to Rep. Bauer, Chief Davoren stated that if the budget is cut it would eliminate one full time Officer and the purchase of a vehicle.

Rep. Maher suggested that any cuts made to the City Police should equally be made to the Town Police.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$2,417,277 was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. I. Streeter.

Rep. Obrey supports full funding of this account and this was their initial request.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$2,392,390 was made by Rep. Powers, seconded by Rep. Massett.

Rep. Powers stated that this was their adjusted funding request.

The Moderator stated that this amount exceeded the Town Council's approved amount and would require a 2/3 approval of the RTM.

Rep. Pasqualini stated that he does not understand the RTM rationale of trying to increase the amount for this account from last year's funding when we need to cut this budget by \$5 million to up to \$14 million dollars. We need to decrease not increase.

The vote on \$2,392,390 failed, 7 in favor 24 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Massett, Obrey, Parker, Powers, I. Streeter, J. Streeter and Welles.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$2,300,000 was made by Rep. J. Streeter, seconded by Rep. Parker.

Rep. J. Streeter stated that this was a compromise number.

The vote on \$2,300,000 failed 12 in favor 19 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Bailey, Baker, Maher, Massett, McCabe, Merritt, Obrey, Parker, Powers, I. Streeter, J. Streeter and Welles.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$2,656,534 was made by Rep. Bauer.

POINT OF ORDER was raised by Rep. J. Streeter. He stated that number was over the approved number of the Town Manager and the RTM does have the authority to do that. The Moderator ruled Rep. Bauer's motion out of order.

The vote on \$2,417,277 failed 9 in favor, 22 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Bauer, Casper, Merritt, Obrey, Parker, Powers, I. Streeter, J. Streeter and Welles.)

The vote on \$2,243,802 carried 21 in favor, 10 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Baril, Bauer, Maher, Merritt, Obrey, Parker, Powers, I. Streeter, J. Streeter and Welles.)

Rep. Massett suggested that a special meeting be held at some point to discuss the independent research study in 2013 that Rep. McDermott had referred to.

A recess was called at 8:41 p.m. The meeting resumed at 8:54 p.m.

Account 10901 - City of Groton Highway Maintenance

A motion for \$1,963,250 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Adams.

Town Manager Mark Oefinger confirmed that the RTM has no authority over this account. He noted that arbitration will hopefully give direction to both parties to resolve this issue.

The vote on \$1,963,250 carried unanimously.

Account 10904 - City of Groton Street Lighting

A motion for \$113,568 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that this is a estimate given for the Cities electric charges. He added that there is discussion on conversion to LED lighting that will reduce this amount in the future.

The vote on \$113,568 carried unanimously.

Total for Account 1090 - \$4,320,620**Account 1011 - Information Technology**

A motion for \$997,716 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Adams.

Manager of Information Technology Brian Hancock stated that he had requested full funding for a technician that was cut by the RTM last year. He added that a part-time position would be helpful if a full time position could not be funded.

Responding to Rep. Kent, Manager of Information Technology Brian Hancock stated that he was looking to work with the BOE Information Technology Department.

The vote on \$997,716 Carried 30 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Pasqualini.)

Account 6050 - Technology Replacement Fund

A motion for \$84,868 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Adams.

IT Manager Brian Hancock stated that this is a scheduled hardware replacement fund.

The vote on \$84,868 carried unanimously.

Capital Item - Computer Technology Acquisition - Software Systems

A motion for \$0 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Assistant to the Town Manager Nicki Bresnyan reviewed the handout on the Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP) System Information given to all RTM members. She explained that the purpose was to replace existing stand alone software applications. She discussed the project development over the last year and noted that ClientFirst will assist staff to enter into contract negotiations with the understanding that funding for the project will be available on July 1, 2017. She mentioned that the partial funding in the amount of \$658,000 recommended by the Town Council would address the Town's most critical needs. She also discussed the impact of not funding the project in FYE 2018.

Responding to Rep. Pasqualini, IT Manager Hancock stated the new software should have a lifespan of at least 15 years.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$658,000 was made by Rep. McCabe, seconded by Rep. I. Streeter.

Rep. McCabe stated that this was the amount approved by the Town Council.

Responding to Rep. McDermott, Assistant to the Town Manager Nicki Bresnayan stated that there were no guarantees but that ClientFirst has been invaluable in assisting us find the right vendor. She added that they feel confident that the vendor selected will know our needs and what the software can and can not do.

Responding to Rep. McDermott, Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that multiple mergers of software companies offer a limited amount of vendors servicing this size community. He added that having ClientFirst as a consultant for the town has been money well spent.

Rep. Kent suggested that because the BOE is involved in the project that some funds already allocated to them could be applied to this account.

Responding to Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Assistant to the Town Manager stated that the funding for the time clocks is on the Town side only.

Responding to numerous questions from Moderator Newsome, Assistant to the Town Manager Nicki Bresnayan stated that the length of the vendor demonstration is not known at this time. She continued to say that the Town has had a detailed feature function review and the vendors know what is needed. She added that they want everyone to be comfortable with the new software before it is implemented. She continued to say that ClientFirst has estimated an implementation time of a month or two.

Rep. Obrey stated that she supports funding for this account.

Responding to Rep. Casper, Assistant to the Town Manager stated that she did not want to jeopardize negotiations by naming the vendors. She acknowledged that 3 vendors responded and 2 of them were qualified.

Responding to Rep. Welles, IT Manager Hancock stated that the Town website was written in house and that in future years of the CIP we plan on a complete re-write to that system.

Responding to Rep. Kent, Assistant to the Town Manager stated that if this project were delayed another year, a substantial amount of additional funding would be required to get it back on track.

The vote on \$658,000 carried 28 in favor, 3 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Bailey, Frickman and Nault.)

At 9:50 p.m. the Moderator recessed the meeting until Monday, May 8, 2017 at 7:00 p. m.

Budget Session - May 8, 2017

*Moderator Scott Newsome called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.
31 members were present and a quorum was declared.*

Members Present: Moderator Newsome, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Baker, Rep. Baril, Rep. Burgos, Rep. Casper, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Evans, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Kent, Rep. Maher, Rep. Marley, Rep. McCabe, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Nault, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Parker, Rep. Pasqualini, Rep. Powers, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Sliker-Hersant, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Watrous, Rep. Welles and Rep. Wilson.

Members Absent: Rep. Bauer, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Longino, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. I. Streeter, Rep. J. Streeter, Rep. Swindell and Rep. Williams.

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Cindy Landry, Registrars of Voters Kristen Venditti and Paul Duarte, Public Works Director Gary Schneider, Asst. Public Works Director Chris Lund, Groton Public Library Director Betty AnneReiter, Mystic and Noank Library Director Christine Johnson, Bill Memorial Library Director Wendy Connal, Bill Memorial Library Treasurer Robert Zuliana, Groton Long Point Association President Michael Flynn, Steve Christina from Groton Ambulance, Town Councilors Bonnie Nault and Rich Moravsik, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Dawn Rahilly.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Jim Streeter, Irma Streeter and Jim Loughlin notified the Town Clerk of their absense.

FINANCE COMMITTEE (continued)

Account 1003 - Voter Registration

A motion for \$117,002 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES COMMITTEE

*Chairman Obrey read the minutes of the meeting held on April 17, 2017.
(Minutes are on file.)*

Rep. Bauer arrived at 7:21 p.m. 32 members present.

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Rep. Bailey clarified he voted for \$122,921 on account 10549.

The vote to approve the minutes as amended carried unanimously.

Account 1063 - Groton Public Library

A motion for \$1,648,049 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,565,647 was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Adams.

Rep. Nault stated that it is unfair for the Mystic- Noank and Bill Memorial Libraries to take more than a 5% reduction to their budget while the Groton Public Library remains fully funded.

Reps. Neugent, Casper, Baker and Obrey all spoke in support of the Groton Public Library and the original figure.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,565,647 failed 7 in favor, 25 opposed (In Favor: Reps. Bailey Marley, McDermott, Nault, Newsome, Quinn and Wilson.)

The vote on \$1,648,049 carried 26 in favor, 6 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Bailey, Marley, Nault, Newsome, Quinn and Wilson.)

Account 3310 - BorrowIT (Connecticard Fund)

A motion for \$48,206 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Parker and so voted unanimously.

Account 10549 - Mystic & Noank Library

A motion for \$122,921 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously.

Account 10549A - Bill Memorial Library

A motion for \$21,150 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Nault.

Rep. Obrey explained the original figure was \$25,000 and the \$21,150 reflects a compromise.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$21,500 was made by Rep. Slieker-Hersant, seconded by Rep. Casper.

Rep. Slieker-Hersant stated she made the motion for the compromise figure at the committee meeting but the correct figure is \$21,500. Proposed cuts to the Bill Memorial and Mystic-Noank Libraries were not in keeping with the full funding for the Groton Public Library.

Councilor Bonnie Nault stated that the library offered to reduce their budget by \$3,000 and the Town Council voted unanimously to accept that figure.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$20,000 was made by Rep. Bailey, seconded by Rep. Nault.

Rep. Bailey stated this is the Town Council approved figure.

In response to Rep. Pasqualini, Moderator Newsome confirmed the first two figures would require more than a 2/3 majority vote.

Responding to Rep. Maher, Mr. Zulini explained the reduction of \$3,000 would probably result in fewer repairs to the library.

Rep. Evans noted the Education account is coming up and if the library offered that figure, the RTM should accept it.

Reps. Bauer and Obrey spoke in favor of \$21,150. Rep. Obrey also stated with the closing of Pleasant Valley Elementary School, the library would have an even greater impact.

The vote on the amendment of \$20,000 carried 22 in favor, 10 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Bauer, Casper, Obrey, Parker, Powers, Merritt, Neugent, Slieker-Hersant, Steinfeld and Welles.)

PUBLIC WORKS

Chairman Deane-Shinbrot read the minutes of the meeting held on April 27, 2017. (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Vote to approve minutes carried 31 in favor, 1 abstention. (Abstaining: Rep. Powers.)

Account 1035 - Public Works

A motion for \$5,751,672 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Deane-Shinbrot stated that this is the Town Council approved number and was reasonable. With the deep cuts to Public Works last year, they really could not go any lower.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,245,834 was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Nault.

Rep. Pasqualini stated we have a 5 million dollar shortfall in the Education budget and suggested taking that amount out of the Public Works budget to cover the Education budget. He asked Mr. Schneider what would that reduction do to the Public Works budget.

Mr. Schneider responded with that reduction, there would not be a department.

Mr. Schneider responded to Rep. McDermott's question regarding the services transferred from Parks & Recreation to the Public Works department. He stated that his department budget has been cut close to 1 million dollars over the past 2 years and the budget is cut to the bone. He has had to look at the distinction between essential services and what are provided to other departments. He listed various services that will have to be cut, but will sit down and work with the Parks & Recreation department.

In response to Rep. Casper questioning the rationale of Rep. Pasqualini's proposed \$1.2 million dollar cut, Rep. Pasqualini stated that there is a \$5 million shortfall and if that is given back to the Education budget the money has to come from some other account.

Town Councilor Nault spoke about the \$33,000 owed to Eversource and the Town Council's referral to address it. The Town Council would like to see the City switch over to LED street lighting. Mr. Schneider is saving the Town money by doing so in the Town of Groton.

Rep. Neugent responded to Rep. Pasqualini's comments and wanted to set the record straight. She stated we do not know how much the State is going to cut. The Town Council cut \$3 million, not \$5.2 million from the Education budget. The Education Committee recommendation was to restore \$655,130, not \$5 million, to the Education budget.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini.

The vote on moving the question carried 26 in favor, 4 opposed, 2 abstentions. (Opposed: Reps. Newsome, Obrey, Pasqualini and Steinfeld. Abstaining: Reps. Deane-Shinbrot and Welles.) Moving the question requires a two-thirds vote.)

The vote on the amendment of \$1,245,834 failed, 1 in favor, 31 opposed. (In Favor: Rep. Pasqualini.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$5,551,672 was made by Rep. Marley, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Rep. Marley stated little has been done to cut this budget. \$200,000 is a small amount but small cuts add up.

Rep. Baker stated it appears every year the Town budget is being balanced on the back of the Public Works department. She asked what the ramifications of a \$200,000 reduction to the department would be.

Mr. Schneider responded it would result in reduction to staff, lay-offs, reduced amount of days the Transfer Station would be open, and snow plowing would also be affected.

The vote on the amendment of \$5,551,672 failed, 4 in favor, 28 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Marley, Nault, Newsome and Obrey.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$5,700,000 was made by Rep. Evans, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Rep. Evans stated the budget needs to be reduced in some way and with the size of the Public Works budget, they should be able to find some savings to cover a \$51,672 reduction.

Rep. Merritt stated he could not support any cuts to this budget. It was prepared by the department responsible for it and presented to the RTM with as many cuts as they felt they could sustain.

Rep. Casper can not support the lower number as it was not made with any rationale and the Town will be hurt with any further reductions.

The vote on amendment of \$5,700,000 fails 10 in favor, 22 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Evans, Kent, Marley, McDermott, Nault, Neugent, Newsome, Obrey, Pasqualini and Quinn.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$5,741,672 was made by Rep. Maher, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Rep. Maher stated in the proposed budget, there is a \$10,000 salary increase for the City of Groton Mayor. She questioned the possibility of reducing \$10,000 to Groton Utilities for the project instead of it coming out of the Public Works budget.

Mr. Oefinger explained they are having ongoing talks with Groton Utilities and are hoping to move the project forward. After submitting their budget, the Town Manager and Town Council cut approximately \$450,000 less than what Public Works felt they needed. The \$10,000 would ultimately come out of the Public Works budget and would punishing the wrong entity.

Rep. Maher withdrew her motion for the amendment of \$5,741,672.

The vote on \$5,751,672 carried with 28 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Evans, Marley, Nault and Newsome.)

Account 2020 - Sewer Operating Fund

A motion for \$6,994,318 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Adams.

The vote on \$6,994,318 carried 31 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Pasqualini.)

Account 2030 - Solid Waste Fund

A motion for \$1,477,092 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Powers.

The vote on \$1,477,092 carried 31 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Pasqualini.)

Account 6040 - Fleet Reserve Fund

A motion for \$1,574,442 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Maher.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,204,092 was made by Rep. Bailey, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Rep. Bailey noted this is the Town Council approved number, and consistent with cuts that need to be made once it is determined what we are going to receive in funding from the State.

In response to Rep. Wilson, Councilor Moravsik explained the rationale for the Town Council number is that they were looking for areas that could be cut and the Town could live without some of the vehicles that had been discussed.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,204,092 carried 26 in favor, 5 opposed and 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Casper, Merritt, Powers, Steinfeld and Welles. Abstaining: Rep. Deane-Shinbrot.)

Moderator Newsome called for a recess at 9:00 p.m.

Rep. Wagner left at 9:02 p.m. 31 members present.

Rep. Burgos left at 9:15 p.m. 30 members present.

The meeting reconvened at 9:16 p.m.

Capital Item - North Stonington Road Bridge

A motion for \$1,215,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Rep. Deane-Shinbrot noted this is not the Town Council approved number. Groton's portion of this project is \$309,000, with Stonington matching that figure, and the rest being paid by a State grant. There is concern the State funding may not be available next year. The ability for the fire truck from Old Mystic to get out is impacted by the bridge not being operational.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Marley, seconded by Rep. Frickman.

Rep. Marley does not approve the spending of Groton taxpayers money to another town. Additionally, the bridge has been out for six years and he is unaware of any issue concerning fire trucks getting out.

Rep. McDermott spoke of concerns there will be an accident in that area and questioned if the funding is FEMA or the State, and how long the funding will be available.

Town Manager Oefinger stated it is DOT funding not FEMA. Structural problems to the bridge were uncovered, not related to the storm. Therefore, not eligible for FEMA funding. There are no assurances the funding from the state will be available next year.

Rep. Welles stated the Town Council wanted to make a decision on funding this project at a later date. He also spoke of the issues concerning the route the Old Mystic fire trucks have to use and the dangers involved.

Mr. Oefinger explained the rationale behind the Town Council vote to not fund this project at this time. The councilors are in favor of this project and would like to revisit it if the Town gets more state funding than we anticipate. He also noted if the town of Stonington does not approve the funding for this project, we would not be obligated to do it as we would not have the funding necessary.

Responding to Moderator Newsome, Mr Schneider stated in order to apply for the State grant for this project, we must notify them by June 30, 2017.

In response to Rep. Obrey, Councilor Moravsik stated that we had originally had agreed to partnering with Stonington to do the project. That was prior to learning of cuts to state funding we are to receive, and the situation changed.

The vote on amendment of \$0 carried 14 in favor, 13 opposed and 3 abstentions. (Opposed: Reps. Baril, Bauer, Casper, Deane-Shinbrot, Gilly, Hubbard, Maher, McCabe, Neugent, Obrey, Steinford, Watrous and Welles. Abstaining: Reps. McDermott, Merritt and Parker.)

Capital Item - LOTCIP Roadway & Intersections

A motion for \$170,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini.

Rep. Deane-Shinbrot stated the funds are for work on the intersection of King Street & Bridge Street. There is much more traffic than when it was retail space. There are 22 acres behind it belonging to Department of Transportation that possibly could be developed.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Powers, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Rep Powers stated these funds are where we need to look to for cuts rather than taking funds from education, police and public works.

Rep. Wilson stated that \$0 is shortsighted because \$170,000 are state funds at no cost to us. If we don't get the funding, we can not do the project.

Mr. Oefinger clarified that the entire \$170,000 would be coming from the state and these funds can only be used for this specific project. We can not move the funds around to use for education or public works projects. If we do not use these funds for this project, then the state will give the funds to another town.

The vote on \$170,000 carried 29 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Powers.)

Capital Item - Culvert Rehabilitation

A motion for \$25,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

The vote on \$25,000 carried 29 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Marley.)

Capital Item - Thomas Road Bikeway

A motion for \$275,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. McDermott.

The vote on \$275,000 carried 27 in favor, 2 opposed and 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Kent and Marley. Abstaining: Rep. Adams.)

The Moderator requested consensus to continue reviewing accounts after 10:00 p.m.

The consensus was to continue by a vote of 19 in favor, 11 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Baker, Bauer, Frickman, Hubbard, Kent, Marley, McDermott, Merritt, Nault and Neugent.)

Reps. Adams, Hubbard and McCabe left at 10:05 p.m. 27 members present.

Capital Item - Spicer House - Parks & Rec Office

A motion for \$75,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Marley, Seconded by Rep. Frickman.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 carried 22 in favor, 4 opposed and 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Bauer, Casper, Deane-Shinbrot and Welles. Abstaining: Rep. Merritt.)

Capital Item - Town Hall Complex

A motion for \$400,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Maher left at 10:11 p.m. 26 members present.

Rep. Pasqualini questioned the cost to keep William Seely school open.

Mr. Schneider responded he was unsure as Public works spends approximately \$26,000 for oil and utilities and Parks & Recreation pays for the rest of it.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Marley, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Rep. Marley stated by keeping the status quo we are saving \$400,000 and will possibly prevent another issue similar to the one that occurred at Noank Elementary School.

Rep. Wilson believes the William Seely School needs to be closed and its contents moved into Fitch Middle School.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 failed 2 in favor, 22 opposed, 2 abstentions. (In Favor: Reps. Frickman and Marley. Abstaining: Reps. Parker and Powers.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$300,00 was made by Rep. Gilly, seconded by Rep. Powers.

Rep. Gilly stated this amount is to cover the code.

Moderator Newsome questioned what effect the reduction of \$100,000 will have.

Mr. Schneider responded it would affect the items that Parks & Recreation wanted to bring over from the William Seeley School or improve on.

The vote on the amendment of \$300,000 carried 18 in favor, 8 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Baker, Casper, Deane-Shinbrot, Marley, McDermott, Neugent, Watrous and Welles.)

At 10:31 p.m. the Moderator recessed the meeting until May 10, 2017 following the regular meeting of the RTM.

Budget Session - Wednesday, May 10, 2017

Moderator Scott Newsome called the meeting to order at 9:00 p.m.

Members Present: Moderator Newsome, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Casper, Rep. Evans, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Kent, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Marley, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Nault, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Parker, Rep. Pasqualini, Rep. Powers, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Slieker-Hersant, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous, Rep. Welles and Rep. Wilson.
Members Absent: Rep. Baker, Rep. Burgos, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Longino, Rep. Maher, Rep. McCabe, Rep. I. Streeter, Rep. J. Streeter, Rep. Wagner and Rep. Williams.

Moderator Newsome stated that 29 members were present and he declared a quorum.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Deane-Shinbrot, Maher, McCabe, I. Streeter, J. Streeter and Wagner notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Cindy Landry, Chief of Police Louis Fusaro, Police Captain Steve Sinagra, Deputy Chief of Police Paul Gately, Town Mayor Bruce Flax, Town Councilors, Human Services Director Marge Fondulas, LedgeLight Health District Director Stephen Mansfield, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Town Clerk Office Assistant Michael Thorpe.

A recess was called at 9:02 p.m. The meeting resumed at 9:15 p.m.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Chairman McDermott read the minutes of the meeting held on April 19, 2017. (Minutes are on file.)

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. McDermott, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

The vote on approval of the minutes carried 28 in favor, 1 abstention. (Abstaining: Rep. Pasqualini.)

Account 1024 - Public Safety

A motion for \$6,688,864 as approved by committee was made by Rep. McDermott, seconded by Rep. Adams.

Rep. McDermott stated that this was the Town Council approved number.

Rep. Marley noted that it was understandable for each departments concern over their requested funding. He added that we are assuming that with this budget that there will only be a \$5 million cut, when in fact it could possibly be much more.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$6,488,199 was made by Rep. Marley, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Chief of Police Louis Fusaro acknowledged that fiscally this was a difficult year. He stated that critical decisions had to be made last year when the departments funding was cut. He noted that an additional cut of \$250,000 was made during FY17. He added that they have continually done more with less but they can not sustain more cuts without it affecting the Town.

Rep. Neugent supports the Town Council and Public Safety Committee number.

Rep. Nault noted that benefits are not included in this account and the City Police was cut 2.6% where benefits are included in the account. He stated that he supports the amended number.

Responding to Rep. Massett, Chief Fusaro stated that at this time the department is down 4 officers and 1 civilian employee.

In Response to Rep. Frickman, Chief Fusaro noted that if the amended figure is approved there would be a reduction in force.

Responding to Rep. Kent, Chief Fusaro stated that they presently have 63 Officers which include 2 Officers that are presently on military duty which need to be replaced.

In clarifying Rep. Wilson's question, Chief Fusaro stated that the officer's on military duty are permanent members of the force but when they are on duty, they are replaced with officer's on overtime.

Rep. Obrey asked if there were any walking beats and stated that she believes the Town Police should be cut the same as the City Police.

Responding Chief Fusaro noted that with the exception of Downtown Mystic in the summertime there are no walking beats. He added that the Town Police was cut significantly more than the City Police last year.

Rep. Marley asked Rep. McDermott to clarify the 39% decrease in crime in the last 20 years.

Rep. McDermott stated that he did not have all the numbers with him but within the last 20 - 25 years there has been an approximately 30% decrease in violent crimes.

Chief Fusaro stated that officer's are better trained and educated and that there has been change in the dynamics of policing. He feels that the decrease in numbers is a compliment to the force.

Rep. Hubbard voiced her concern over the multiple drug overdoses reported, especially among the

children.

Rep. Neugent recommended that the RTM look at each account individually.

Responding to Rep. Wilson, Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that there is a supplemental appropriation that will allow funds to be added or withdrawn depending on the fiscal situation.

Councilor Morton addressed the RTM and gave the Town Council's rationale for the funding of this account. She asked the RTM to support it, adding that if additional cuts are made and there is a reduction in force, overtime pay would be counter-productive.

Rep. Merritt supports the Town Council's and Public Safety Committee number.

The vote on \$6,488,199 failed 9 in favor, 19 opposed, 1 abstention. (In favor: Reps. Bailey, Kent, Marley, Massett, Nault, Obrey, Parker, Quinn and Wilson. Abstaining: Rep. McDermott.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$6,595,733 was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Parker.

Rep. Nault stated that this was a 1% cut from last year's adjusted budget.

Rep. Casper supports the Town Council and Public Safety Committee number.

Rep. Bailey stated that each account should be scrutinized and that cuts should be made wherever possible.

Rep. Marley stated that the amended number is only \$66,000 less than last years' adjusted budget amount.

Rep. Neugent stated that excessive overtime could be detrimental to some of the officer's performance.

Responding to Rep. Parker, Chief Fusaro stated that there are 3 officers attending the academy and they are part of the 63 in the department.

The vote on \$6,595,733 failed, 12 in favor, 16 opposed, 1 abstention. (In favor: Reps. Bailey, Gilly, Kent, Marley, Nault, Newsome, Obrey, Parker, Quinn, Slieker-Hersant, Swindell and Wilson. Abstaining: Rep. McDermott.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$6,621,975 was made by Rep. Slieker-Hersant, seconded by Rep. Parker.

Rep. Slieker-Hersant stated that this was a 1% cut from the Town Council number.

The vote on \$6,621,975 carried 16 in favor, 13 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Baril, Bauer, Casper, Hubbard, Loughlin, Merritt, Neugent, Pasqualini, Powers, Steinfeld, Watrous and Welles.)

At 10:10 p.m. the majority of the RTM members decided to remain and vote on additional accounts.

At 10:12 p.m. Reps. Adams, Hubbard, Marley, Nault, Swindell and Wilson departed, 23 members present.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES COMMITTEE (continued)

Account 1051 - Human Services

A motion for \$577,399 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously.

Account 7320 - Human Serv Asst Fund

A motion for \$17,400 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Human Services Director Marge Fondulas stated that these funds come from trust funds and not from the General Fund.

The vote on \$17,400 carried unanimously.

Account 1054 - Health/Service/Cultural Agencies**Account 10540 - Ledge Light Health District**

A motion for \$292,530 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously.

Account 10541 - VNA (School Health)

A motion for \$1,166,072 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,072,570 was made by Rep. Watrous, seconded by Rep. Gilly.

The vote on \$1,072,570 carried 22 in favor, 1 abstention. (Abstaining: Rep. Frickman.)

Account 10542 -VNA (Health Promo)

A motion for \$42,590 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously.

Account 10547 - Marine Sewage Disposal

A motion for \$19,980 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

MOTION TO AMEND TO \$0 was made by Rep. Kent, seconded by Rep. Loughlin.

Rep. Kent stated that the taxpayer should not be responsible for this service.

Pete Chappell of Pete's Marine Sewage Disposal stated that there are 18 marinas in the Town of Groton. He noted that the funds requested are less than 1% of the taxes received from these marinas. He continued to say that the State of Connecticut is committed to keeping the waters clean.

Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that the town receives \$168,000 worth of services for \$19,000. He noted that the program is heavily subsidized by the Federal Government and if the service is not provided some boat owner's may do the wrong thing. He strongly recommended to support full funding to this account.

Rep. Neugent stated that she supports funding for this account.

Rep. McDermott believes this service is essential and supports full funding.

Rep. Casper voiced his concerns over health issues if this service is not provided.

Rep. Bailey noted that it is a criminal offense to dump sewage in open waters within defined perimeters of the shore but it is difficult to enforce.

The vote on \$0 failed, 1 in favor, 22 opposed. (In favor: Rep. Kent.)

The vote on \$19,980 carried unanimously.

At 10:43 p.m. the Moderator recessed the meeting until May 15, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Session - Monday, May 15, 2017

Moderator Scott Newsome called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

28 members were present and a quorum was declared.

Members Present: Moderator Newsome, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Casper, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Evans, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Kent, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Marley, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCabe, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Nault, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Parker, Rep. Pasqualini, Rep. Powers, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Sliker-Hersant, Rep. Watrous, Rep. Welles and Rep. Wilson.

Members Absent: Rep. Baker, Rep. Burgos, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Longino, Rep. Maher, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. I. Streeter, Rep. J. Streeter, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Wagner and Rep. Williams.

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Cindy Landry, Parks & Recreation Director Mark Berry, Manager of Recreation Services Jerry Lokken, Senior Center Supervisor Mary Jo Riley, Shennecossett Golf Course Superintendent Eric Morrison, Planning & Development Director Jon Reiner, Assistant Director Planning & Development Deborah Jones, Manager of Inspection Services Kevin Quinn, Community Development Manager Paige Bronk, Probate Judge Nicholas Kepple, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Dawn Rahilly.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Hubbard, Swindell, I. Streeter, J. Streeter and Wagner notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

Moderator Newsome stated that after the RTM is done with the accounts on this evenings agenda, they will discuss the FOI complaint regarding the last Town Council meeting.

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Chairman Wilson read the minutes of the meeting held on April 18, 2017 and stated they did not have a quorum. (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. McCabe and so voted unanimously.

Chairman Wilson read the minutes of the meeting held on May 3, 2017 and stated they did not have a quorum. (Minutes on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Adams and so voted unanimously.

Account 1064 - Parks & Recreation

A motion for \$1,586,586 was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Powers.

Rep. Wilson stated this is the Town Council approved number.

Rep. Marley citing budget news from the State Capital today, encouraged everyone to look at each line item very carefully. After speaking with State Representative Chris Conley indicating larger cuts, he feels cuts need to be made to this account.

Rep. McDermott noted the numbers coming from the State are constantly changing and we have no idea what the final number will be. He asked Parks & Recreation Director Mark Berry if the

number in the budget book includes the \$54,000 cost increase to that department with items in the Public Works department now being moved to Parks & Recreation.

Parks & Recreation Director Mark Berry stated that number does not include the \$54,000, and listed the items that are being moved from Public Works to Parks & Recreation.

Responding to Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Mr. Berry explained the Town Council approved number is 2.7% less than last year. When you factor in the transfer of expenses from Public Works to Parks & Recreation the additional \$54,000 bumps it up to a 6% decrease.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,450,000 was made by Rep. Kent, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Rep. Kent noted a transportation fund that is approximately \$160,000 and the necessity to explore ways to cut that cost. Additionally, in 2016 Senior Center fees were \$56,000 and should be added back in.

Rep. Neugent stated she supports the first number. The Town Manager has already reduced Mr. Berry's request by \$63,306. She spoke of the many ways Parks & Recreation continue to look for new and efficient ways to run the department, raise funds and apply for grants. They should stop being punished for being efficient.

Rep. Obrey questioned how one department can change another department's budget with apparently no discussion and notification coming through a public meeting.

Rep. Wilson explained it was not a direct transfer of expenses. One department cut those expenses out of their budget which means another department is going to have to pick them up.

Mr. Oefinger stated nothing has been approved or authorized yet. After the reductions we will see where we are and work out something that accommodates both departments.

Rep. Casper does not see alternative choices being a viable solution for senior transportation.

Rep. Merritt stated we should not get involved in contracting out transportation for the seniors.

The vote on amendment of \$1,450,000 failed 3 in favor, 25 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Kent, Marley and Nault.)

Mr. Berry, responding to Rep. McDermott, stated approximately 350 senior citizens use the Senior Center on a daily basis.

Rep. Kent noted in 2016 the Senior Center fees totaled \$56,170. He questioned why this year they are only \$2,500.

Mr. Berry explained the difference in the amount is due to the fees being paid are going into Account 3240, which is the Special Revenue account. Those fees cover costs associated with instructors, materials and supplies.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,507,257 was made by Rep. Marley, seconded by Rep. Nault.

Rep. Marley stated this represents a 5% cut,

In response to Rep. Massett, Mr. Berry outlined the impact and some of the proposed cuts to events and services a 5% reduction would impose.

Responding to Rep. Frickman, Mr. Berry stated budget cuts and lack for funding of staff was probably the reason behind not charging parking fees at Esker Point Beach anymore. He noted they do charge parking fees for the Thursday night concerts held there.

Mr. Berry, in response to Rep. Slieker-Hersant, stated they do not have a donor to sponsor the Fourth of July parade, however, Groton Utilities is donating \$10,000 to cover the Parks & Recreation portion of the cost of the fireworks.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,507,257 failed 4 in favor, 24 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Kent, Marley, McCabe and Nault.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,554,854 was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Rep. Nault stated this represents a 2% reduction of the Town Manager's number.

Rep. Casper stated he can not support that number. This is such a small part of the budget compared to the school budget. He noted the number of seniors that will be impacted by this reduction are out of proportion to the rest of the Town.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,554,854 failed 11 in favor, 17 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Adams, Frickman, Kent, Loughlin, Marley, McCabe, Nault, Newsome, Quinn, Slieker-Hersant and Wilson.)

The vote on \$1,586,586 carried 21 in favor, 7 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Kent, Marley, McCabe, Nault, Newsome, Quinn and Slieker-Hersant.)

Account 2010 - Shennecossett Golf Course Fund

A motion for \$1,179,862 was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Adams.

Rep. Wilson stated that this is the Town Council approved number.

Responding to Rep. Marley, Director Barry explained the golf course is Town operated. Greens fees and membership pay for all the expenses associated with the operation of the golf course. Last year the golf course returned \$59,000 back to the Town. This account has no impact on the General Fund.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,092,463 was made by Rep. Kent, seconded by Rep. Nault.

Rep. Kent stated this represents a reduction of \$87,399. If the golf course was privately owned, that figure is the amount the Town would be taxing the property.

Mr. Oefinger explained the history of the Town purchasing the golf course and the difficulty of selling it as it was purchased in part with State grants and is considered an open space. He spoke of it being an asset for Groton and how it sets us apart from other communities. Operationally, it pays for itself and the Town does receive some revenue from it.

Rep. Kent responded that the Town is not receiving enough revenue from a five million dollar asset and Groton should not be subsidizing recreation.

In response to Rep. Massett, Mr. Berry affirmed operationally, the golf course is self sustaining with the exception of capital projects.

Director Berry, responding to Rep. Pasqualini, noted that the golf course paid the City of Groton approximately \$36,000 for water.

Rep. Casper stated he does not support cutting the budget.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,092,463 failed 6 in favor, 22 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Kent, Loughlin, Marley, McCabe, Nault and Quinn.)

The vote on \$1,179,862 carried 23 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Kent, Marley, McCabe, Nault and Quinn.)

Account 3240 - Recreation & Senior Activities

A motion for \$1,122,356 was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Wilson stated this is the Town Council approved number.

The vote on \$1,122,356 carried 26 in favor, 1 opposed and 1 abstention. (Opposed: Rep. Marley, Abstaining: Rep. Nault.)

Capital Item - Park Improvement/ADA Compliance

A motion for \$0 was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Wilson stated this is the Town Council approved number.

Rep. Neugent questioned what the approximate cost would be to only address the ADA requirement for the Tanglewood Park basketball court project.

Director Berry stated the entire project needs to be funded. Aside from the ADA compliance, the playing surface is cracked creating a safety hazard.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$45,000 was made by Rep. Neugent, seconded by Rep. Massett.

Rep. Neugent stated this figure relates to this project addressing the safety hazard and ADA compliance.

Rep. McDermott questioned if there would be any penalties or repercussions for putting this project off to a future date.

Mr. Berry explained that we have a plan put together for addressing ADA compliance. If the Town continues to not fund the plan, Groton could be found in non-compliance.

The vote on the amendment of \$45,000 failed 7 in favor, 20 opposed, 1 abstention. (In Favor: Reps. Bauer, Casper, Loughlin, Massett, Neugent, Powers and Welles.)

The vote on \$0 carried 21 in favor, 6 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Bauer, Casper, Loughlin, Massett, Merritt and Powers. Abstaining: Rep. Parker.)

Capital Item - Variable Message Display

A motion for \$50,000 was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Wilson state this is the Town Council approved number.

Rep. Nault explained the \$50,000 in funds will come from grants and donations.

In response to Rep. Kent, Mr. Berry stated if there were not enough funds generated for this project, it would not go forward.

The vote on \$50,000 carried 26 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Rep. Kent. Abstaining: Rep. Merritt.)

Capital Item - Copp Park Habitat Restoration

A motion for \$25,000 was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Wilson stated this is the Town Council approved number.

Director Berry stated this project will enhance the meadow on Copp Park and explained the education component, working with schools developing this site as a field trip location. This project is funded entirely by grants with no funds coming out of the General Fund.

The vote on \$25,000 carried 27 in favor, 1 abstention. (Abstaining: Rep. Merritt.)

Capital Item - Copp Family Park Trail Improvements

A motion for \$100,000 was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Wilson stated this is the Town Council approved number.

Mr. Berry explained 80% of this project is funded by grants and requires a 20% match. He noted the RTM and Town Council approved this in FYE 2015.

The vote on \$100,000 carried 26 in favor, 2 abstentions. (Abstaining: Reps. Baril and Merritt.)

Capital Item - Calvin Burrows Field Lighting

A motion for \$83,000 was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Wilson stated this is the Town Council approved number.

Mr. Berry explained Groton Little League received a grant from Groton Utilities and through fundraising have raised half of the remaining amount. He stated they are looking to finance what they are unable to raise. This project would have no impact on the General Fund.

The vote on \$83,000 carried unanimously.

Moderator Newsome called for a recess at 8:33 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:47 p.m.

Account 1046 - Planning & Development Services

A motion for \$1,247,174 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

In response to Rep. Neugent, Planning Director Jon Reiner stated the update to the zoning regulations are coming along slow but steady. He detailed the progress and where the project currently stands.

Rep. Kent noticed the elimination of the Town Excess property management and questioned how that is being addressed.

Mr. Reiner explained there is some money left over in that account from last years capital improvement project. This year that item can be reduced but it may need to be increased next year.

The vote on \$1,247,174 carried unanimously.

Account 10545 - Service Agencies

A motion for \$65,150 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Obrey stated this was the Town Council approved number.

The Town Manager gave background information on Service Agencies and outlined the process from soliciting applications to determining which agencies receive funding.

The vote on \$65,150 carried 25 in favor, 3 abstentions. (Abstaining: Reps. Baril, Merritt and Nault.)

Account 10070 - SE CT Council of Governments (SCCOG)

A motion for \$16,349 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously.

Account 10071 - SE CT Enterprise Region (SECTER)

A motion for \$14,041 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey as so voted unanimously.

Account 10072 - SEAT

A motion for \$88,211 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

The vote on \$88,211 carried 26 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Rep. Kent. Abstaining: Rep. Nault.)

Account 10073 - SE CT Probate Court

A motion for \$13,433 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously.

Moderator Newsome opened up discussion on the discrepancy on the budget figures from the April 21, 2017 Town Council meeting. At the May 10th regular RTM meeting, Mayor Flax came before the RTM and stated there had been a mistake in adjourning the April 21st Town Council meeting rather than recessing it. Subsequently, \$255,000 was voted into the Board of Education budget at that meeting. At the meeting held on April 26th they "legally" voted for the entire number.

Rep. Neugent stated she feels the original Town Council approved number for the Board of Education budget, \$74,747,00, should be the correct figure. Only the FOI commission can declare a meeting illegal and they have not made that determination yet.

Rep. Massett expressed her agreement with Rep. Neugent.

Rep. Wilson stated that he disagrees and that the number the Town Council approved when they adjourned, \$74,492,000 should be the correct number.

Town Clerk Moukawsher agreed with Rep. Wilson. She outlined the procedure followed to ensure public participation in our public meetings such as notice, agendas posted etc. The meeting in question was adjourned and video shut off. They reconvened twenty minutes later and voted on items without notification to the public. The final figure is ultimately the RTM's decision, and the members will have the opportunity to discuss it prior to voting.

Town Manager Oefinger concurred with Ms. Moukawsher. He stated Mayor Flax came before the RTM as a courtesy to let the members know what occurred the evening of April 21st. He encouraged the RTM to hear what the Education Committee has to say and take it from there. Ultimately the RTM has the final say on the budget.

Responding to Rep. Obrey, Finance Director Landry explained the decision to change the figures on the budget spreadsheet came from her department and was probably a mistake. They should have retained the Town Council's number because the mill rate has been set on the total budget that the Town Council passed.

Rep. Marley stated that he was at the Town Council meeting that evening and reiterated the events that took place. The Mayor adjourned the meeting and according to Robert's Rule of Order, the meeting was over. He questioned at what point do we adjourn a Town Council meeting and then reconvene and vote without notice to the public. Groton Town Charter states that all Town meetings are governed by Robert's Rule of Order.

Moderator Newsome stated he is troubled at the thought of setting a bad precedent whereby a group of the Town Council can meet, vote, adjourn, reconvene and then vote to approve the budget and set the mill rate. He believes the Mayor and Town Council acted honorably and it was unintentional. However, by reconvening, it was an illegal meeting by all definitions. He went on to explain the procedure the FOI Commission goes through to hear complaints but because they only meets once or twice a month they will not have a chance to address this prior to the vote on May 18th.

Rep. Neugent state she respectfully dissents from this decision.

At 9:52 p.m. the Moderator recessed the meeting until Thursday, May 18, 2017.

Budget Session - Thursday, May 18, 2017

Moderator Scott Newsome called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Moderator Newsome, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Baker, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Casper, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Evans, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Kent, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Marley, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCabe, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Nault, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Pasqualini, Rep. Powers, Rep. Sliker-Hersant, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous, Rep. Welles and Rep. Wilson.
Members Absent: Rep. Burgos, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Longino, Rep. Maher, Rep. Parker, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. I. Streeter, Rep. J. Streeter, Rep. Wagner and Rep. Williams.

Moderator Newsome stated that 29 members were present and he declared a quorum.

The Moderator reported that Reps. I. Streeter, J. Streeter notified the Town Clerk of their absence. Reps. Parker and Wagner notified the Town Clerk that they would be arriving late.

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Cindy Landry, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Susan Austin, Board of Education Chairman Kim Shepardson Watson, Board of Education members, Town Mayor Bruce Flax, Town Councilors, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Town Clerk Office Assistant II Michael Thorpe.

FINANCE COMMITTEE (continued)

Account 2120 - Revaluation Fund

A motion for \$86,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Nault stated that this account is mandated by the State.

The vote on \$86,000 carried unanimously.

Rep. Maher arrived, 30 members present.

Account 1092 - Fire District PILOT

A motion for \$246,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously.

Account 2060 - Mumford Cove

A motion for \$21,028 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that these funds are used for fire protection.

The vote on \$21,028 carried unanimously.

Account 4010 - Groton Sewer District

A motion for \$834,176 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded, by Rep. Bailey.

The vote on \$834,176 carried 29 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Pasqualini.)

Party Leaders Rep. Obrey and Rep. McDermott called for a Democratic and Republican caucus at 7:15 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 7:45 p.m.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chairman Neugent read the minutes of the meeting held on May 3, 2017. (Minutes are on file.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Neugent, seconded by Rep. Massett and so voted unanimously.

Rep. Kent filed a minority report and it is on file with the minutes of this meeting.

Rep. Parker arrived, 31 members present.

Capital Item - Water Service Needs

A motion for \$0 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Neugent, seconded by Rep. Parker and so voted unanimously.

Capital Item - Asbestos Removal

A motion for \$0 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Neugent, seconded by Rep. Wilson and so voted unanimously.

Capital Item - Mary Morrisson

A motion for \$0 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Neugent, seconded by Rep. Evans and so voted unanimously.

Account 1080 - Education Services

A motion for \$75,402,131 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Neugent, seconded by Rep. Massett.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$74,492,000 was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Wilson stated that this figure is the last approved number by the Town Council.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$69,000,000 was made by Rep. Gilly, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Rep. Gilly noted that there is still a potential for an \$18 million cut from the State, which would result in a property tax increase of 25%. She added that education is important however these potential cuts need to be addressed.

Rep. Neugent stated that the last approved number from the Town Council was \$74,747,001. She stated that citizens petitions and her constituents show that support is strong for the Education Department and its award winning schools. She added that if the education cost sharing funds are

cut more than expected there is a special appropriation to return the funds. She supports the Education Committee number.

Rep. Frickman disclosed that he is a teacher and that he can not support the lower number. He stated that if more cuts are made it would involve removing technology, workshops and various programs that is needed to maintain the quality of education that Groton provides.

Rep. Maher noted that her constituents support the Education budget and as a mother of two children supports the Education Committee number.

Rep. Gilly stated that if either of the larger numbers are approved and the education cost sharing funds are drastically cut, residents would receive supplemental property tax bills. She suggested that the lower number should be approved and if the education cost sharing funds are not cut as much as anticipated, funds could be returned.

Dr. Graner addressed the RTM and stated that he understands the apprehension due to the uncertainty of this year's education cost share funding this year. He reported that he is in regular communication with Senator Somers and Representatives Conley and de la Cruz regarding budget proposals for FY 18 and FY 19. He noted that the Republican Senate caucus has a proposed budget with Groton receiving a \$30,000 increase. He added that it was a very detailed budget showing where all funding would come from and included a formula for computing the education cost sharing funds. He acknowledged that he was not convinced that they would receive an increase or even the same amount they received last year but that it is one of the newest proposals on the table. He discussed an Enrollment/Staffing Report for FY11 -FY18 that was distributed to all RTM members. He advocated a \$2.3 million cut on the initial request of \$77.7 million.

Responding to Rep. Kent, Dr. Graner acknowledged that the figures in the Enrollment/Staffing Report FY11 - FY18 he distributed this evening were correct and the figures for the same statistics in the Board of Education Budget book were in error.

Rep. Bailey believes that future Electric Boat hiring will bring more families to Groton but not as many as anticipated.

Rep. Casper stated that Groton is a bargain compared to other surrounding Towns as far as taxes are concerned. He remarked that the schools in Groton are something we should all be proud of.

Rep. Wilson announced that the majority of his constituents want to see fiscal responsibility from their elected officials.

Rep. Massett stated that she supports the Education Committee number.

Rep. Welles stated that his constituents asked him to support the BOE budget.

Rep. Baker stated that her constituents support the education budget and that she supports the Education Committee number.

Rep. Obrey appealed to the RTM to approve the Education Committee number. She added that the Base Realignment Committee will be coming back in the future and Electric Boat is hiring over 5,000 more employees. Making Groton attractive should be one of our priorities and urged members to vote for the future of Groton.

Rep. Marley noted that this is a very contentious line item. He stated that we are facing a significant cut from the State and there are no guarantees that the cut will be \$5 million, it could be much more. He compared previous budgets with staffing and enrollment numbers. He continued

to say that it is our job to balance the budget and the Board of Education budget is 76% of it. He mentioned that Pleasant Valley Elementary School was already slated to close and that the RTM should be fiscally conservative.

Rep. Nault agrees with Rep. Marley and supports the second amended number.

Rep. Swindell stated that we support two Police Departments and two Public Works Departments and we need to support our schools. He supports the Education Committee number.

Rep. Bauer stated that she supports the Education Committee number.

Rep. Merritt stated that he supports the Education Committee number and would prefer to see an increase to it.

Rep. Parker stated that her constituents support the Education Department and that she will support the Education Committee figure.

Councilor Dean Antipas confirmed that the last approved number by the Town Council was \$74,747,001. He stated that on average since 2001 there has been a 1.75% increase in the education budget. He asked the RTM to consider the value of education in the Town of Groton. He added that a good education system makes the Town attractive to all that are planning a move to the area.

Rep. McDermott, asked how it was possible for State to fund \$100,000,000 for schools projects and then try to cut \$17,000,000.

Dr. Graner stated that it was not State money. The Bonding Commission was authorized to bond \$481,000,000 for those school projects on the priority list and all 3 of Groton School projects are on that priority list.

Responding to Rep. McDermott, Dr. Graner stated that the yearly cost per student in Groton is similar to that of students in Ledyard and Stonington.

Rep McDermott stated that many of his constituents are seniors living on a fixed income or are getting ready to retire. They have voiced their concerns of a large tax increase and their ability to afford to stay in Groton.

Rep. Pasqualini stated that Governor Malloy's proposed budget is cutting the Education budget and it is the Town Council's and RTM's job to make those cuts to be fiscally responsible. He noted that the proposed Town budget assumes a \$5 million cut and that is just a guess. Using this scenario the BOE budget, which is 75% of the Town budget should be cut \$3 million and the rest of the Town budget would absorb the remaining 2 million.

Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that as a result in the uncertainty of state education funding, four revenue alternatives were considered. All four alternatives would use the same FYE 2018 proposed expenditures and revenue estimates but exclude state revenues. The amount of State revenue the Town would receive would differ in each scenario and then the resulting local mill rate would be determined based on the state revenue in each scenario. He noted that he chose the scenario which reduced education cost sharing by \$5 million to start the budget deliberations. He continued to say that the Town of Groton has one of the lowest mill rates in the State.

Responding to Rep. Pasqualini, Dr. Graner said he made the decision to close Pleasant Valley Elementary School before its scheduled closing date because of budget constraints.

Dr. Graner noted that the education budget is closer to 62% of the Town budget rather than 75% or 76% as others have mentioned. He mentioned that Ledyard approved a 2.4% increase to their education budget and East Lyme had approved a 2.9% increase to theirs. He asked the RTM to approve the \$75.4 million so they can provide the services the Town deserves.

Rep. Maher stated that other local Towns are supporting their school systems and that we should support ours as well. She added that families may move to surrounding Towns for better educational opportunities.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Marley, seconded by Rep. Adams.

The vote on moving the question carried 24 in favor, 7 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Casper, Frickman, Maher, Neugent, Obrey, Welles and Wilson.)

Rep. Loughlin departed, 30 members present.

The vote on \$69,000,000 failed 1 in favor, 28 oppose, 1 abstention. (In favor: Rep. Gilly. Abstaining: Rep. Marley.)

A recess was called at 9:45 p.m. The meeting resumed at 9:55 p.m.

Rep. Loughlin returned, 31 members present.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$74,747,001 was made by Rep. Adams, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini.

Rep. Adams stated that this was the approved Town Council number.

Rep. Powers spoke of comparisons of Groton's municipal fiscal indicators with other Town's and Cities in the State of Connecticut. The report confirms that Groton, compared to most of the other 168 communities in Connecticut has been in a very enviable position. He stated that he is proud to support the Education budget and supports the Education Committee number.

Rep. Frickman stated that Groton needs to keep the schools competitive. He noted the differences in teaching from 2001 - 2017. He mentioned that the number of special education students have increased and it costs twice as much for their education.

State Representatives, Senator Somers and Representative Conley discussed the numerous budget proposals currently on the table in Hartford. They understand that these are difficult times and assured residents that they are working hard on their behalf. They urged residents to continue writing and emailing comments to the Appropriations Committee in Hartford. They noted how Groton is unique because it has the only military base in the state. They are looking for a change in the formula that computes the Education Cost Sharing grant money and bipartisan support for a fair budget for Groton.

The vote on \$74,747,001 failed 13 in favor, 18 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Adams, Deane-Shinbrot, Evans, Gilly, Kent, Marley, McDermott, Nault, Newsome, Pasqualini, Slieker-Hersant, Watrous and Wilson.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$75,247,000 was made by Rep. Frickman, seconded by Rep. Parker.

Rep. Frickman stated that this was a compromise number.

Moderator Newsome stated that this number was higher than the Town Council approved number and would require a 2/3 majority of the RTM for approval.

The vote on \$75,247,000 failed 17 in favor, 14 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Bailey, Baker, Deane-Shinbrot, Evans, Gilly, Hubbard, Kent, Loughlin, Marley, Nault, Pasqualini, Watrous and Wilson.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$75,001,131 was made by Rep. Frickman, seconded by Rep. Parker.

Rep. Frickman stated that this was another compromise number.

Moderator Newsome stated that this number was higher than the Town Council approved number and would require a 2/3 majority of the RTM for approval.

Rep. Nuegent stated that she supports this number.

The vote on \$75,001,131 failed 20 in favor, 11 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Bailey, Baker, Baril, Gilly, Hubbard, Kent, Marley, Merritt, Nault and Watrous.)

MOTION TO AMEND to \$74,900,000 was made by Rep. Frickman, seconded by Rep. Powers.

Rep. Frickman stated that this was another compromise number.

Moderator Newsome stated that this number was higher than the Town Council number and would require a 2/3 majority of the RTM for approval.

Rep. Swindell stated that this number would restore the level 2 cuts identified by Dr. Graner but the closing of Pleasant Valley Elementary School and all other level 1 cuts would remain.

Rep. Casper referred to Rep. Marley's figures for past BOE budgets that were in 2017 dollar amounts. He stated that this number would be the lowest since 2001.

Rep. Neugent stated that she supports this number.

The vote on \$74,900,000 carried 25 in favor, 6 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Bailey, Baril, Gilly, Hubbard and Merritt.)

At 10:45 p.m. the Moderator recessed the meeting until Monday May 22, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Session - May 22, 2017

Moderator Scott Newsome called the meeting to order at 7:16 p.m..

32 members were present and a quorum was declared.

Members Present: Moderator Newsome, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Baker, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Casper, Rep. Cini, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Evans, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Kent, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Marley, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCabe, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Nault, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Parker, Rep. Pasqualini, Rep. Powers, Rep. Sliker-Hersant, Rep. Irma Streeter, Rep. Jim Streeter, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous, Rep. Welles, Rep. Wilson.

*Members Absent: Rep. Burgos, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Longino, Rep. Maher, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Wagner and Rep. Williams.
(Rep. Loughlin arrived later in the meeting.)*

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Cindy Landry, Public Works Director Gary Schneider, Public Works Supervisor Stacey Leitch, Emergency Communications

Manager Joe Sastre, Groton Long Point President Mike Flynn, Groton Ambulance President Steve Christina, Mystic River Ambulance President Chris Clarkin, Town Councilor Bonnie Nault, Board of Education member Gretchen Newsome, Town Clerk Betsy Mounawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Dawn Rahilly.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Hubbard and Maher notified the Town Clerk of their absense.

Moderator Newsome introduced Rep.Cini, and welcomed her back to the RTM.

The Moderator stated there have been questions about reconsidering account votes that have been taken during this budget session. He explained that reconsideration is allowed by Robert's Rule of Order and outlined the requirements and procedure for reconsidering accounts. Discussion followed and Moderator Newsome proceeded to answer the members questions.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE (continued)

Account 1014 - Emergency Communications

A motion for \$1,382,809 as approved by committee was made by Rep. McDermott, seconded by Rep. Adams.

Rep. Loughlin arrived at 7:32 p.m. 32 members present.

Rep. Massett reminded Emergency Communication Manager Joe Sastre that after cuts to his department last year he had stated that the reduction would result in losing a staff member. In light of that she questioned how this number would affect his department.

Mr. Sastre stated last year they decided not to make any decisions until the RTM concludes the budget this year. He stated there is a possibility of not filling a vacancy with the dispatchers and looking at other options to cut costs.

In response to Rep. Pasqualini, Mr. Sastre clarified that the \$70,000 in budget item 5220 was only for utilities.

Rep. Kent questioned when the Tower lease fees were set and who negotiated them.

Mr. Sastre responded they were renegotiated five years ago by the Purchasing Department and will probably be renegotiated in another five years.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$1,422,512 was made by Rep. Baril, seconded by Rep. J. Streeter.

Rep. Baril stated the loss of a dispatcher and cutting down on radios puts firefighters lives in jeopardy. The funds for the Police Department were not cut and does not want to see cuts to the 911 dispatch center.

Moderator Newsome reminded members that this number is above the Town Council number and therefore requires a two-thirds vote which equals 21members.

The vote on amendment of \$1,422,512 failed 12 in favor, 20 opposed. (In Favor: Reps. Baril, Casper, Massett, McDermott, Merritt, Neugent, Powers, I. Streeter, J. Streeter, Swindell, Watrous and Welles.

The vote on \$1,382,809 carried 28 in favor,4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Baril, Massett, Merritt and J. Streeter.)

Account 10910 - Groton Long Point Police

A motion for \$249,375 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, second by Rep. Parker.

Rep. Nault stated that this is the Town Council approved number. They moved this figure as a 5% cut of the Groton Long Point Police request. The amount is less than they spent in 2016.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$243,530 was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Rep. Nault explained that this number represents a 0.6% cut from last years budget. Because we have cut the Town and City Police, Groton Long Point Police should be cut by an comparable amount.

Groton Long Point President Mike Flynn stated that Groton Long Point Police requests only approximately 37% of their budget. A 6% cut on their requested figure is dramatic and will have a large impact on their police department. A cut in that amount takes a bigger hit because they are not funded in the same manner as the Groton Town and City police departments are.

Rep. Merritt stated he does not support the reduced figure.

The vote on the amendment of \$243,530 carried 19 in favor, 13 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Baker, Casper, Frickman, Loughlin, Massett, McCabe, Merritt, Parker, Powers, I. Streeter, J. Streeter, Welles and Wilson.)

Account 10911 - Groton Long Point Highway Maintenance

A motion for \$169,813 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Parker.

In response to Rep. Nault, Mr. Oefinger confirmed by agreement, the RTM can not modify this number.

The vote on \$169,813 carried 29 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Baril and Marley. Abstaining: Rep. Obrey.)

Account 10912 - Groton Long Point Street Lighting

A motion for \$13,476 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Parker and so voted unanimously.

Account 10543 - Groton Ambulance

A motion for \$52,976 as approved by committee was made by Rep. McDermott, seconded by Rep. Wilson.

Groton Ambulance President Steve Christina reported that 80% of their revenue comes from Medicare and 20% from those with private insurance.

Responding to Rep. Massett, Mr. Christina explained the staff at Groton Ambulance are certified paramedics. Lawrence & Memorial paramedics are certified at a higher level and the dispatch center decides who responds to the call.

Rep. Baker out at 7:59 p.m. 31 members present.

Rep. Marley suggested Groton Ambulance is privately operated and mentioned that the bills he has seen from them are extremely high. He noted the land and building in which they operate are owned by the Town and they rent at a negligible fee.

Mr. Christina clarified that Groton Ambulance has been a 501 C3 since 1954 and confirmed they rent their location from the Town.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$0 was made by Rep. Marley, seconded by Rep. McCabe.

Rep. Obrey stated the importance of the services provided in Groton and urged members not to consider the motion for \$0.

In response to Rep. Marleys comments about their high fees, Mr. Christina explained the fees they charge are set by the State of Connecticut and noted that 80% of their revenue come from Medicare, Medicaid and Tricare.

Rep. Pasqualini stated that Groton Ambulance has done a great job of keeping their cost down.

Rep. Wilson stated he could not support \$0.

Rep. Baker returned at 8:02 p.m. 32 members present.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Bailey, seconded by Rep. Powers.

The vote on moving the question carried 28 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Baril, Newsome, Obrey and Welles.)

Responding to Rep. Wilson, Mr. Christina confirmed that Groton Ambulance and Lawrence & Memorial Hospital have bundled billing and therefore some of the items showing up on the bill are not charges from Groton Ambulance.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 failed 1 in favor, 28 opposed, 2 abstentions. (In Favor: Rep. Marley. Abstaining: Reps. Nault and Powers.)

The vote on \$52,976 carried 30 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Rep. Marley. Abstaining: Rep. Nault.)

Account 10548 - Mystic River Ambulance

A motion for \$25,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. McDermott, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Responding to question from members, Chris Clarkin, Mystic River Ambulance President reported half of the calls they respond to are from Groton. The other half are from Stonington, and that they receive \$35,000 from the Town of Stonington.

MOTION TO AMEND to \$35,000 was made by Rep. Obrey, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini.

Rep. Obrey stated her rationale for the motion of \$35,000 is that there are a number of agreements we have had with Stonington that we have not funded our share.

A 2/3 vote, 22 members in favor, is necessary to pass as it is above the Town Manager's number.

The vote on amendment of \$35,000 failed 20 in favor, 12 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Bailey, Deane-Shinbrot, Evans, Kent, Marley, McCabe, McDermott, Nault, Neugent, Newsome and Watrous.)

The vote on \$25,000 carried 31 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Pasqualini.)

Capital Item - Golf Course Facilities - Club House

A motion for \$30,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Deane-Shinbrot stated this is the Town Manager and Town Council approved number.

The vote on \$30,000 carried 31 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Marley.)

Capital Item - Leased Buildings

A motion for \$40,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Deane-Shinbrot stated this is the Town Manager and Town Council approved number.

The vote on \$40,000 carried 31 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Frickman.)

Capital Item - Fuel Tank Replacement

A motion for \$45,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously.

Moderator Newsome called for a recess at 8:32 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:54 p.m.

Capital Item - Natural Gas Conversions

A motion for \$75,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Rep. Deane-Shinbrot stated this was the Town Manager and Town Council approved number.

In response to Moderator Newsome, Mr. Schneider explained major Town buildings have been identified that could be converted to natural gas which is less costly than oil.

The vote on \$75,000 carried 30 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Rep. Pasqualini. Abstaining: Rep. Bauer.)

Capital Item - Sewer Line Infrastructure Repair

A motion for \$50,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously.

Capital Item - Pump Stations

A motion for \$651,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. J. Streeter.

Rep. Deane-Shinbrot stated this was the Town Manager and Town Council approved number.

Responding to Moderator Newsome, Public Works Assistant Director Chris Lund explained this project is to replace the dated, worn out equipment at the Gravel Street pump station.

The vote on \$651,000 carried unanimously.

Capital Item - Treatment Facility

A motion for \$668,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, seconded by Rep. Parker.

Responding to Moderator Newsome, Mr. Lund explained this figure covers two different projects that were previously approved. It was discovered there are additional upgrades need to do the first project which necessitates the additional funds.

The vote on \$668,000 carried 30 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Cini and Pasqualini.)

Moderator Newsome stated the accounts scheduled for this meeting are completed. He asked the members if there were any accounts from the budget sessions they would like to reconsider.

Having none Moderator Newsome moved on to accounts scheduled for Thursday, May 25th.

Account 1077 - Contributions to Other Funds

A motion for \$546,661 was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Powers.

Rep. Nault stated this was the Town Council approved number.

The Town Manager explained that this number was cut in half by the Town Council due to the budget crisis. This figure represents the Town Council approved number.

The vote on \$546,661 carried 31 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Cini.)

Rep. Marley left at 9:08 p.m. 31 members present.

Account 1075 - Capital Reserves/Contributions

A motion for \$448,000 was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Powers.

Rep. Nault explained Finance Director Landry had just supplied him with this figure. It is based on, and is a direct result from the cuts and authorization to CIPs that were made over the course of this years budget deliberations. This amount will fund the CIP projects the RTM has approved.

The vote on \$448,000 carried unanimously.

Account 5010 - Capital Reserve

A motion for \$2,817,000 was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

As requested by Rep. Nault, Ms. Landry explained this figure represents the total of all projects, both in the General Fund and Water Pollution Control, that the RTM and Town Council have approved.

The vote on \$2,817,000 carried unanimously.

Account 1076 - Debt Service

A motion for \$4,510,538 was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

Finance Director Landry explained the bulk of this budget covers long term debt. The principle and interest payments on debt we have previously issued, such as Board of Education debt, roads and streets.

The vote on \$4,510,538 carried unanimously.

Account 1074 - Contingency

A motion for \$650,000 was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Adams.

The Town Manager warned of not funding this account sufficiently. Mr. Oefinger summarized the history of this fund over recent years. He reported there are a number of contracts that are going to be settled soon and it will be necessary to have the funds to pay for the negotiated increases. He explained if the funds in this account are not used at the end of the fiscal year, the remainder goes back into the General Fund.

Discussion followed.

The vote on \$650,000 carried 29 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Rep. Swindell. Abstaining: Rep. Nault.)

MOTION TO RECONSIDER Account 1090 - Groton City Police was made by Rep. Nault,

seconded by Rep. Kent.

Moderator Newsome reminded members reconsidering an account required 2/3 approval of the RTM.

Rep. Obrey called for a Democratic caucus at 9:30 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 9:51 p.m.

Rep. Nault noted the disparity between the percentage of cuts between the Town Police and City Police budgets as the rationale behind the motion to reconsider the Groton City Police budget. The percentage should be more equitable and would like to see it closer to 1%. In the interest of full disclosure, he reported he told the Groton City Mayor if they were not in the same ballpark, he would move to reconsider the account.

The vote on the Reconsideration of Account 1090 - Groton City Police fails 1 in favor, 30 opposed. (In Favor: Rep. Nault.)

Moderator Newsome thanked the members for their time and effort during this budget session.

Rep. Obrey thanked Town Manager Mark Oefinger for his service to the Town of Groton.

Rep. Bailey thanked the members of the RTM for their hard work especially during the annual budget session.

L. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 9:57 p.m. was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Wilson and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Dawn G. Rahilly, Assistant Town Clerk

Michael Thorpe, Town Clerk Office Assistant II